

TO SUSPEND LAWS WHICH CONFINE COASTWISE TRADE
TO AMERICAN BOTTOMS.

JUNE 23, 1898.—Laid on the table and ordered to be printed.

Mr. Low, from the Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries,
submitted the following

ADVERSE REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 10164.]

The Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries, to whom was referred House bill 10164, submit the following report:

This bill calls for the suspension of laws which confine coastwise trade to American bottoms. Protection against foreign bottoms in competing for our coastwise trade has always been an unchangeable policy of this Government. Had it not been for this immunity from foreign competition our merchant marine would have been driven from the ocean years ago. The exigencies of the present war with Spain do not warrant the abrogation of our present coastwise laws.

There has been nothing in the progress of the war with Spain to demand the passage of this bill. Admiral Dewey has annihilated the Spanish fleet in the Pacific; Admiral Sampson and Commodore Schley have the Spanish West India fleet securely sealed up in the harbor of Santiago de Cuba.

The coastwise commerce of the United States is as safe to-day as in time of peace, which is evidenced by the fact that the steamship companies are running their lines without interruption, except such lines as have sold or chartered their steamers to the Government. The effect of this bill, if enacted, would be to create fear and distrust, followed by the loss of business in our coastwise commerce.

The committee therefore recommend that the bill do not pass.